

The Lion and the Lamb

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THE LION AND THE LAMB -- Buffy the Vampire Slayer Fanfiction

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The night before, Buffy had had a dream, and so here she was at the Seer's Hut.

It was a hole in the wall located on an alley off Cloud Nine Avenue, a deceptively cheery name for a street in the seedy part of Sunnydale. She didn't like coming this way at night. The drunks lurking in the doorways thought she was a hooker. Only a hooker would roam Cloud Nine Avenue by herself at 11:30 at night.

But she'd had a dream about the Seer's Hut and so here she was.

The Hut was the only business located in the narrow alley. The door

was open and a light was beaming from inside. That's the only way Buffy could tell she had reached her destination. It was hard to read the faded, hand-painted sign from the street.

Using her usual Slayer caution, Buffy slipped her hand into her white leather Kenneth Cole purse and clutched a stake. She took a breath and turned the door handle with her left hand.

Sitting at a round table in the middle of a bare room was a female. Buffy knew she was female because she had breasts. Buffy would never have been able to tell from the face. It was a demon's face, scaly of skin and red of eye. The female wore a low-cut green dress over her ample figure.

Sitting next to her, looking bored, was a slim, blond man wearing a black leather coat. It was Spike.

"Oh great. Can't I go ONE day without bumping into you?" Buffy groused.

"It's nice to meet you, too" said the demon.

Spike stood up. "Sod this. I'm not having my fortune told with Bitchy Summers lookin' on."

"Spike, if you EVER call me that again I am SO going to...."

"ERM-aherm," enunciated the demon. "Why don't you sit down, both of you. Buffy, I'm Cilantra, and I'll be telling your fortune tonight. " She held out her hand. Buffy was used to staking demons, not shaking their hands, but the dream was still with her so she extended stiff fingers. Cilantra gripped them. "Now, please. No bickering in my establishment. It screws up the vibe."

"The vibe? Is your demon dimension stuck in the seventies?" It was rude, but Buffy was too irritable -- and anxious -- to care. Spike snickered. "DON'T laugh at my jokes" Buffy shot at him.

"Stay or go, I don't give a damn," said Cilantra. "But if you are staying, please sit down and be quiet, both of you." Buffy turned to leave and Spike rose as if to follow. Cilantra didn't like seeing her night's income walking out the door. "You'll ignore your dream, then," Cilantra said. Buffy froze.

"You know about the dream?"

"Obviously."

"Hell's bells,!" Spike sneered. "Your bloody Slayer's dream led you to this dump? Maybe you need to have your prophetic bolts tightened, sweetie."

"Fine, I had a dream," Buffy retorted. "What's YOUR excuse?"

"I was just in the neighborhood. Saw the sign and thought it would be a kick to have me cards read," Spike shrugged. The truth was, he had felt compelled to come to this godforsaken part of town and visit the Seer, guided as if by an unseen force but he couldn't tell The Bitch that. She'd just curl her puffy lip and make some snide remark, and

then he'd have an uncontrollable urge to grab her head by that silky blond hair and snap that soft white neck of hers. And if he tried that, he'd get a nasty migraine. Not worth it.

Cilantra rapped her long, green fingernails on the table. "My fee is 20 bucks apiece. Pay me now, hear your fortunes or scat." Buffy sighed in resignation.

"I hate scatting," she said. She pulled an eelskin wallet out of her Kenneth Cole bag and took out a \$20 bill. She sat down and put the money on the table. Spike tossed two dollars on top of it.

"That's all I have," he said.

"Okie doke," said Cilantra. She picked up a deck of cards from the table and began to shuffle them.

"'Okie doke'? I pony up Andrew Jackson and Spike only has to pay two lousy bucks?"

"No. You're going to pay the difference if you want to hear what I have to say." Cilantra began distributing cards on the table. Spike grinned at Buffy, who rolled her eyes and fished an additional 18 dollars out of her eelskin wallet. She scanned the cards and saw they looked nothing like Tarot cards. "They are cards sacred to my clan," Cilantra responded to the unasked question. "You should have guessed that when I shuffled. You never shuffle Tarot cards. Ahh. Look here." Cilantra pointed to two cards she had just laid out in the center of the table. One depicted a lion and the other, a lamb.

"You two are natural enemies," she said. "Which is which?" She grasped Buffy's hand and Spike's clasped them together. Buffy reddened and Spike looked away. They were remembering November 30.

"Ohhh my," Cilantra said. "Each is both predator and prey. Vampire and Slayer. Now this is a first." She let go of their hands. "More challenging than the typical lion and lamb pair. "

"What is the meaning of the cards," Buffy asked, rubbing her hand on her peach suede skirt.

"It's the old Biblical cliché," Cilantra said. "The lion lying down with the lamb."

Spike wagged his eyebrows at Buffy. She ignored him. "And that signifies..."

"Predator and prey making peace, forming an alliance of some sort," Cilantra answered, fingering her deck for another card.

Spike smacked the table impatiently. "We've done that, Fishhead. I thought you were supposed to tell us the future."

Cilantra place a third card between the lion and the lamb. "The appearance of these cards should be taken as a warning. Your alliance is probably quite precarious or this wouldn't have shown up." She pointed to the third card which depicted salivating jaws and red eyes of a beast of indeterminate type. "This is the new predator," she said. "It is far stronger than either of you. In order to defeat the

new predator, the two of you must form a strong alliance or you will both be 'eaten,' as it were, by the predator. But with the duel predatorship between you, I have to say you don't have much of a chance."

Buffy glanced at Spike, whose pale, almost delicate face was impassive. "We've worked together some," she said, picking nervously at her freshly manicured nails. "He helped me defeat Ang -- a common enemy a couple of years ago. We beat off five times our number a few months after that. He's given me some good leads lately and --"

Cilantra cut her off. "Working side by side isn't enough. The cards demand an alliance. That means forgetting your grudges, no more planning each other's destruction when all of this is over,. and forming a bond of absolute trust. As though you were mother and son, or brother and sister, or lovers."

"All right," Buffy and Spike said simultaneously. Spike got up. "I'm finished here. Gonna grab a smoke."

"Yeah, I'm gone too." Buffy put her white leather bag over her shoulder. "I really should be patrolling. Thanks for the reading, Cilantra. We REALLY should do it again."

"I'm not done," Cilantra said. Spike was already out the door.

"Oh fabulous, there's more?" Buffy said. "Sorry. Not caring. Have to motor." She had barely stepped out the door when Cilantra called after her.

"What about the greater good?" the she-demon said.

"I don't give a flying one about the greater good." Spike's voice came from curb. The smell of his cigarette was sneaking in the door and stinking up Cilantro's establishment.

"Well, Spike, neither do I," said Cilantra, who was now standing in the doorway next to Buffy. "But you two paid your fee and I'm trying to give you your money's worth. I am amoral, sure, but I'm not unethical."

"Staring at your cleavage was worth the two bucks I paid," laughed Spike.

"I know vampires pretty well, Spike. You're all narcissists and psychopaths, caring only about your own sweet hides. Just remember this: if the lion doesn't lie down with the lamb, your sweet hide will be dust. So will the sweet hide of your old mistress, if that means anything to you." Spike made no response to this speech. He stopped smoking his cigarette and it burned away between his fingers, threatening to singe his skin.

"As for you, Buffy" Cilantra continued, "The fact is that without Spike as your ally, you are going to fail in your struggle against your enemy. You will die, your closest friends will die, and you will end up giving a big fat boost to human and inhuman forces of darkness." Cilantra smiled suddenly. "I'm kind of looking forward to it." Buffy stared at her, dumbfounded, her expression blank. Cilantra tapped her shoulder. "Would you mind moving, sweetie? I've told your

fortune and now it's time for you to go." Buffy stepped away from the door, and Cilantro went back inside and slammed it behind her.

"I like her," Spike said. "She's nice and scaly."

"So, what do you think?" Buffy said, approaching him slowly.

"About the lion and lamb piffle? I think you got screwed out of 38 bucks, pet."

"I tend to believe her," Buffy mused. "My dreams led me to her for a reason."

"You and your prophetic dreams. You're just as crazy as Drusilla." He walked away from her down the alley toward Cloud Nine Avenue. Buffy followed him.

"Why did you come here, Spike?"

"I don't know," he said, still walking.

"Tell me why, Spike."

Spike stopped, whirled, and shouted "I don't KNOW!" His voice was so loud it echoed in the night and Buffy jumped back about two paces. The intensity of his reaction startled even Spike. Buffy stood before him, her light hair reflecting the moon, the dreaded figure of the Slayer -- once feared even by Spike -- illuminated by a single streetlight.

"What are we going to do?" she said.

Spike smiled then, his demon-soul gleaming though narrowed, cruel eyes. "I've waited for this moment for a long time, love," he said. "The moment when you would ask ME what to do. When you'd come to me for help. Maybe at last I've tamed the shrew." He smiled a small, reptilian smile and touched a long, white finger to her face. Never, Buffy thought, was anything at once so beautiful and so vile as William the Bloody. Her eyes filled with tears as she slapped his hand away. If what Cilantro had said was true, then it was hopeless. The war against Them was already lost and her fate -- and the fate of all she held dear -- was sealed. Spike could not conceal his glee at having made her cry. His smile became broader.

"Good-bye Spike," Buffy said hoarsely. "I guess I'll see you in Hell." She strode away from him, alone in the moonlight on Cloud Nine Avenue and then Spike knew he had gone too far. With the lightening quick movement of the vampire, Spike was in front of Buffy, blocking her path. Like all demons, he wanted, needed to survive -- and he believed Cilantro. He had to make Buffy trust him if he wanted to keep unliving. And he did. The world still held interest for him. Drusilla was in it somewhere and he could never give up hope of seeing her face again. Willow walked the earth, sweet and accepting, perhaps just waiting for the day when he once again had his power to feed and could make her immortal, a worthy consort to such a vamp as Spike. And here was the Slayer...standing before him, needing him utterly for the first time. Perhaps they would succeed against Them, and she would look up at him with those big, soft eyes and thank him. Perhaps...just perhaps...one day she would kiss him, and he would be master of her lips and tongue again, and this time it would not be a

spell...how he could gloat over her then. There was plenty to live for.

"Sorry, love," he said. "I was trying it on, is all." He wasn't very convincing. He still felt triumph from making her cry and she could see it in his eyes. She gave him the finger and pushed past him.

Years ago, when the demon invaded William's body at the time of turning, it endeavored to drive all humanity from him. One way in which Spike became as demonic as possible was in never recalling his days as a man. How ironic that now the demon could no longer survive merely by being a demon, that it would become necessary to call to the fore the humanity it had always endeavored to suppress -- a challenge with a body and mind as passionate and prone to love and loyalty as those of William. Spike knew he had to convince Buffy that he was trustworthy, and he couldn't do that as long as the demon shone through his eyes at her, mocking her, hating her. So he broke a 126-year habit and endeavored to remember...

From the recesses of his mind came a dim recollection of the last time he'd had a fight with one of the neighborhood toughs before he was turned. This time he'd actually won the fight...a rarity for him. William could have kept hitting and kicking after the creep fell to the ground but he didn't. He gave the bloke a hand up, because he knew how it felt to be beaten and humiliated. He didn't want to make another man feel that way, even a mindless bully like Eddie. William had felt compassion -- compassion for his enemy.

Now as he faced Buffy, Spike reached for that feeling, pulled it out of the depths of his subconscious mind and brought it into his heart.

"I'm sorry, Buff," he said softly. "You know me, always talking shit. I want to beat Them. I want to help you."

"Bullshit," Buffy shot at him. She tried to walk away, but Spike took her by the shoulders.

"Look at me," he said. He lifted her chin with a forefinger so she could see his eyes. They were serious, regretful, almost kind. And he told her the one thing he knew she would believe.

"I want to see Drusilla again," he said. "If I don't cooperate with you, I never will. So there it is." He extended his hand to her, an offering of peace. Buffy wouldn't take it but the darkness passed from her eyes.

"Let's go talk to Giles," she said. The two walked the ten blocks to Giles' place side by side, without another word spoken.

End
file.